

## **Israeli Students on Exchange to the U.S. - Transcript**

**BONNIE S. GUTMAN** (Cultural Affairs Attaché – U.S. Embassy Tel-Aviv): We just had a terrific meeting with 22 high school students who are going to be going to the United States for ten months to be high school students in the U.S. They came with their parents and we also listened to some students who returned from last year. This was an opportunity for us to tell the students and the parents what they could expect. To remind the students to write home and for them to care for, what will be probably the best year of their student life, they will live a year with an American families, learn about American cultures, society and values and hopefully be the link between the people of the United States and the people of Israel in the exchange program that brings people closer together through student exchanges. These programs are of proven value because the people do learn about one another's culture. These students will come back with a greater understanding of how Americans think, how they feel, and how they look towards the world. The State Department is funding this program, as it has for many years so our job has been to scout out the youth of Israel to find the best students with the most potential to adapt, be flexible, and do well in a foreign culture. And so our job is to match-make, if you will, to find the best students with the best families in America.

**MYRA WILCOX** (Host mother visiting a YES alumna): My name is Myra and I'm from South Dakota. And I am here to talk about being a host parent for a student from Israel through the exchange student program called YES. This is Doa Hardzozy, she is the family that we hosted. Uh, she is the child that we hosted from Israel. She lives in Tamara and we have come here, myself and my family, have come here to stay with her for two weeks and just learn their culture and their way. And we've met her wonderful family and friends here in Israel through the exchange program.

**LUBNA ELIAS** (Mother of a YES participant): I'm here because my daughter is living in the States as part of the YES program –exchanges of foreign students. And I am here because we had to come to the American Embassy to get some information and some of the rules for their traveling and living there for one year. I am excited and nervous. Not really because I know she'll be in really good hands. And the whole way of dealing with things are getting really, very in a good way. I mean like knowing the family before leaving, letting our children leave and knowing where they are going be located and what family they're going to live and getting to know the family before really helps you to feel calm and secure about your son or daughter who is leaving for the States. So we already know the family. I talked to the mom, the host mom...

**NARDIN ELIAS** (YES student – Daughter of Lubna Elias): She was so nice.

**LUBNA ELIAS** (Mother of a YES participant): Yes. She sounds really great and she seems so good. She sent us some pictures of her. So I am relaxed and confident. I have been working with this project as an English teacher at my school since six years ago and I have sent many of my students and now it is her turn, my daughter...

**NARDIN ELIAS** (YES student – Daughter of Lubna Elias): I'm so excited and it's scary, but I know it's going to be a wonderful adventure and wonderful year. So, I will learn a lot of things about myself, about other people in other countries.

**INTERVIEWEE:** Where are you going?

**NARDIN ELIAS** (YES student – Daughter of Lubna Elias): I'm going to Michigan; to Benzonia. It's in a small village in Michigan. Um, that's all.

**GLADYS ABU ELEZAM** (YES Coordinator): We have 22 students ready to go in the YES program. They're all placed in different states in the United States so they're all over. Some of them are in California, some are in Indiana, and some are in Texas – in all different states. I think that students come back with a lot to contribute to their community in Israel. They do share all kinds of experiences they've been through in the U.S. with their classmates here in Israel. They teach them about community service. We're not very involved with community service here and this main subject, or this main project is one of the things what we would like our students to be aware of and to be involved in. I do believe it's a very positive experience.

**TEXT:** Filmed and Edited by: Office of Public Affairs. U.S. Embassy – Tel Aviv, Israel. July 2009